Curso de vida Elder

The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory

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Quite simply, the social pathways of human lives, particularly in their historical time and place, were not a common subject of study at this time. Consequently, social scientists knew little about how people lived their lives from childhood to old age, even less about how their life pathways influenced the course of development and aging, and still less about the importance of historical and geographic contexts. Considering this, one should not be surprised that, during this period, the scholarly literature contained no reference to the concept of the life course and graduate programs offered no seminars on life course topics.

maturation of pioneering longitudinal studies and the recognition that

knowledge about adolescent and adult development could not be extrapolated from child-based

models.

AGE, TIMING, AND THE LIFE COURSE

Time operates at both a sociohistorical and personal level

Locating people in cohorts by birth year provides more precise historical placement.

Cohorts, in effect, link age and historical time. Historical changes often have different implications

for people of different ages—that is, for people who differ in life stage (Ryder, 1965).

People of different ages bring different experiences and resources to situations and consequently

adapt in different ways to new conditions. When historical change differentiates the

lives of successive birth cohorts, it generates a *cohort effect*. Older and younger children, for

example, were differentially vulnerable to the economic stresses of the Great Depression

(Elder, 1974, 1999).

History also takes the form of a *period effect* when the impact of social

change is relatively uniform across successive birth cohorts. Both period and cohort effects

constitute evidence of historical influences.

Definición: Un caso específico de cohorte es la de nacimientos, es decir, la que constituyen las personas nacidas durante un mismo intervalo de tiempo (generalmente un año).